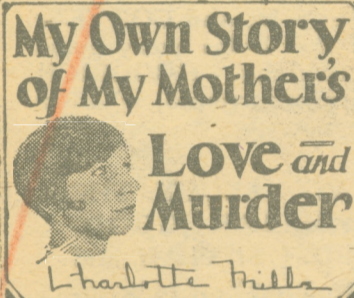


Mrs. Mills Felt No Real Shame; Her Passion for Hall Was Strong

Much Like Stranger to
Her Husband, Says
Charlotte

Editor's Note:—What did James Mills, poor church sexton, think of the love affair between his wife and the Rev. Edward Hall? What did he feel when Mrs. Mills told him of her affection for the rector? Did Mrs. Mills herself feel any guilt or shame? This powerful real life drama of human hearts is revealed in all its tragic details by Charlotte Mills, daughter of the woman who was murdered with the Rev. Hall on a lonely New Jersey farm four years ago. No one interested in life can afford to miss a word of this throbbing story.



LOVE UNASHAMED

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I can never remember that mother took an attitude of shame or guilt in regard to the love I know existed between her and Mr. Hall. She never made a secret of her fondness for the church, and I have heard her say dozens of times that she would never give it up till she died. Neither did she make a secret at home of her admiration and affection for Mr. Hall.

My father's attitude, as far as I could judge, was a curious one. His nature is peculiar; I never understood it very well; always wondered what was passing in his mind, and why he did certain things the way he did them. He might have seen it would lead to trouble.

There were few actual quarrels between mother and father on the subject of the church or the pastor; the quarrels were usually about money or how we children were to be brought up. Mother insisted I should keep on at high school, and father didn't think it necessary. He had to go to work as a young boy. He didn't see why we should do differently. What was good enough for him was good enough for us.

Mother Always Won

Mother used to be wild about that. She used to say I should keep on at high school till I graduated and stay away from work that might bring in a few poor dollars a week, even if she had to go out scrubbing or cooking in somebody's family to keep me there. And mother won. Mother always won. She was positive in character and couldn't be walked over.

For years my parents were out of sympathy and almost like strangers. And yet that isn't quite true, either, for mother was a great stickler for our being respectful and obedient to father. She was fond of him, I guess, in a way. Anyhow, she knew she owed him a certain kind of loyalty, if nothing else, and, although they got terribly on each other's nerves and went their separate ways as much as possible, there weren't any real battles between them, as has been ridiculously said in some newspaper stories—throwing plates and vases and hitting each other!

I confess I saw mother's side

better than father's. Mother and I thought alike about practically everything. I don't believe father intended to be cruel, but he must have felt mother's indifference and disappointment in him, and her contempt for his lack of ambition and get-up-and-get, and he liked to tease and annoy her sometimes. He has irritating ways of saying and doing things, and if you asked him to stop, instead of seeing you aren't in any mood for silliness, he goes right on till you're wild.

Slapped Back

If mother used to "slap back" sometimes, who can blame her? I certainly never did. There are limits to every one's patience and endurance. I hated to see her flare up, but once or twice I have heard her turn on him in desperation and say:—

"Why, I'd give more for Mr. Hall's little finger than for your whole body!"

And I couldn't feel as shocked as you might expect me to.

You see, I loved Mr. Hall myself so much. For a long while after the murders I had the strangest feeling of wanting to go out to the cemetery where he is buried and kneel down and talk to him. If I could have dug down into the ground and drawn him from his very grave and put my arms around him and loved him, it would have been a relief.

It was a wild idea. But you get wild ideas and crazy thoughts when you stay alone night after night, thinking over what I had to think of! I always thought of Mr. Hall when I was a kid as a man who would be a perfect daddy. They say some women are "born mothers." Well, he was a "born father." Life would have been just one long happiness if fate could have brought him and mother and me together and let us stay that way forever.

I have thought about it so much that I have come to believe in fate—that everything happens by an irresistible force, that it has to happen and nothing can change it. It may sound foolish for a girl of 20 to say that she is a "fatalist," but I am one, and I have been through enough to make me so.

The word "fatalist" puts me in mind of an incident that happened long ago, when I was small and Danny and I had two pet chameleons. Father made a little wire cage for them with a sliding door and cups for their food. Dan and I used to feed them scraped

bananas and orange peel and flies and ants.

One day an accident happened to their box and it fell down a step place, and the smallest of the two chameleons died. We thought they were both dead when we picked them up, but one wasn't, and mother used the word "fatalism." I forget how she said it, but her idea was that it was the fate of the one that died to die and the fate of the other (who was in the same wreck) to live.

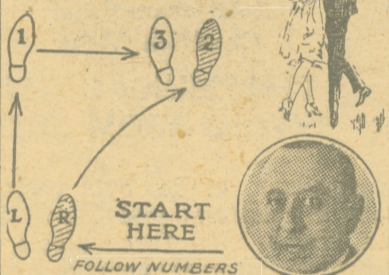
But he was hurt. He got his tail broken, and couldn't seem to move without his tail.

Bandaged His Tail

Mother pared down some match sticks and got some cotton and peroxide, bathed Petie, and actually mended his tail with the tiny splints. She bound it all up with strips of gauze, and he was the funniest looking thing I ever saw.

(Continued on Page 29)

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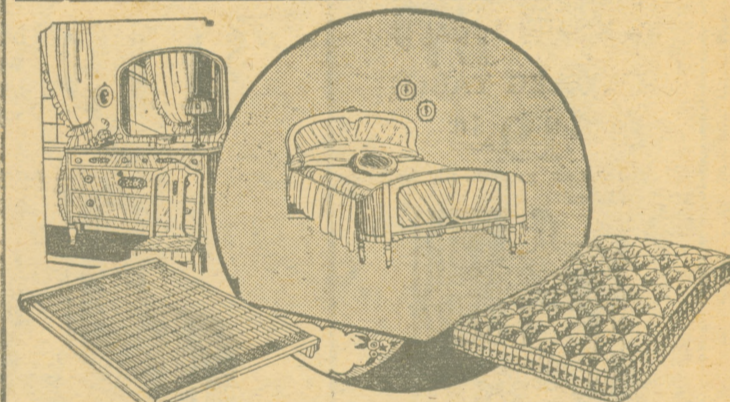
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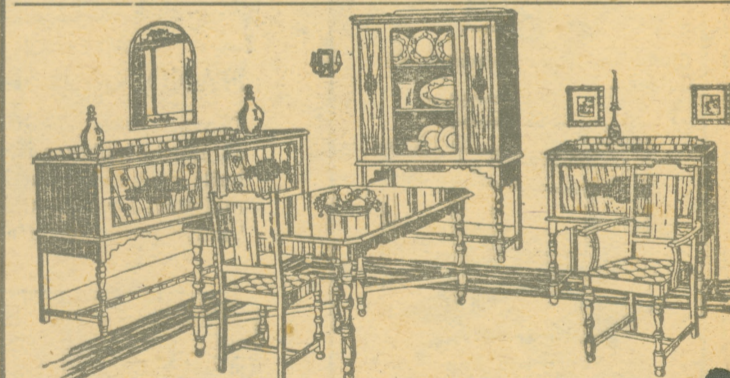
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